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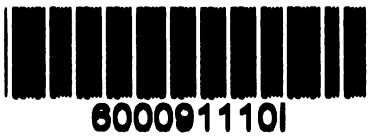
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THE BOOK OF MAN'S DESTINY


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THE

BOOK OF MAN'S DESTINY:

A SIMPLE AND COMPREHENSIVE

INTERPRETATION

OF THE

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN;

BEING AN ATTEMPT TO RESTORE
THIS PART OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES TO ITS
PROPER USE.

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

In studying the New Testament we have often pondered over what appears to us a most strange circumstance. This Book consists of narratives, by four writers, of Christ's sojourn on earth; of a narrative of the Acts of the Apostles; of epistles from Holy Men, containing observations upon Christ and His teaching; and, lastly, of seven epistles to the seven Churches, and *one general epistle* to all His servants, from Christ Himself, written at His dictation by the hand of His servant John. In the narrative of the evangelists we turn for real knowledge, and look, or profess to look, for our rule of life; while the one epistle, that from God the Son Himself, is a closed book, the one narrative to which we look least, if we look at all, for instruction. In short, it seems, in our day, to be a book almost as profitless as though the Redeemer had never broken the seals to reveal to His servants the deep and solemn truths it contains.

The chief use of this book in our time appears to be to exalt ourselves and condemn those who differ from us, and to form worthless chronological accounts of the world's history.

We cannot think that the revelation made by Christ Himself was intended for so low a purpose; but rather feel impelled to believe that the general account or epistle was given for a great and practical use, that each individual who looked to Christ for enlightenment, might find in it knowledge of the first importance, and a torch to light his path.

The nature of the seven special messages or epistles strengthens us in this belief. They are eminently practical, and contain admonition, advice, and encouragement applicable to each individual; and almost forbid us to suppose that the longer and general epistle to all the churches was merely sent to give uncertain information of some wars, tumults, and sufferings to be undergone by portions of mankind many years after the men to whom it was sent should have finished their earthly career, or "after the end of the world" so far as they were concerned had arrived. Moreover, St. John in his introduction says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." But how could they hear with the mind, if the words were beyond their comprehension; or how could they keep the things written, if they were placed far beyond their ken?

As each special message contained definite advice and instruction to the men to whom it was sent; so we may believe that the general message to all, contained, under symbols and figures which they understood, information and instruction which it was of the greatest importance that they individually should possess, and which they were capable of comprehending. The special messages contained instruction on subjects upon which it was eminently desirable that the men of each church should, at that very time, be enlightened; and went at once to what were, so far as regarded those men, things of the day and hour. Thus, to the church of Smyrna, he says, "Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried,"—a prophecy which they could not fail to understand; and to the church of Philadelphia, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation,"—a promise of incalculable value. And we believe the general message or epistle had the

same practical character; and, instead of containing vague chronological accounts, was of present application, and intended to be understood at that very time. We believe it contains the doctrine of the Gospel in its most extended sense; or an account of man and his destiny, and of God's dealing with him, from the beginning to the end, or from the beginning of the earthly career of each man to his departure and entering upon his permanent state of existence.

Influenced by this view of the subject, we offer for the reader's consideration what appears to us the true, but perhaps incomplete, interpretation of the Revelation written by St. John. The key we find in the book itself and other parts of Holy Scripture; for we believe that the Revelation contains nothing more than a closely connected and definite enunciation of the Eternal Truths scattered throughout the other parts of the Sacred Writings. Hence, if we offer for the reader's acceptance what after all is only hypothesis, we also place in his hands a safe guide. If we bring forward any hypothesis that is not strictly in accordance with the plain reading of the Scriptures, let him reject it as erroneous; but if our interpretation agree thoroughly with the Sacred Word, then although the learned may question some parts of our theory, they must allow that it is based on a sure foundation.

The Bible opens with the proclamation of the LIVING GOD, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, who sees and knows that all He does is very good. All created beings, excepting man, appear blindly to obey the instincts He has endowed them with, and to rely solely upon Him, and not to have the power to swerve from their true allegiance to their Creator. But man is permitted to elect whether he will serve God or not; he is not, like the rest

of the animal creation, unavoidably bound to obey; he has power to choose the alternative of turning from God. Nevertheless, man is not wholly left by God to follow his own devices, without a guide; he has good counsel, and inducements to serve and rely upon the living God alone. This liberty man makes a bad use of; he directly turns from the living God, places his hopes, and relies upon something else.

When God placed man upon the earth, He said thou shalt not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. God does not say "I will kill you," but "Thou shalt surely die." He foretels the necessary result of their eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The evil spirit then suggested to the woman that they should not surely die, but should be as gods, knowing good and evil. They chose to rely upon the promise of the evil suggester; and gained the knowledge of good and evil, but without the power to avoid the evil and to choose the good. With this knowledge came the dread of death, blasted expectations, fear of the presence of their Creator, Sustainer, and good Councillor, and bitter remorse stretching out even to eternity. And from this knowledge sprung envy, hatred, and malice, and all the evils they have engendered in the world. Thousands of examples might be given by way of illustration, but we select one from the Sacred Writings —that of Cain. His knowledge of good and evil only served to show him that his brother was better than himself, and to engender in his breast envy, hatred, and malice. Without the knowledge of good and evil, he could not have made such comparison. Yet he was not left without good counsel—"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted." But he turned from the living God, and trusted to his own cunning devices; he would *secretly* destroy the brother whose goodness excited his envy and

anger. The result again was disappointment and remorse. The act was no *secret;* the blood of his brother cried to heaven in the face of all creation; and Cain now dreaded that all nature would rise up to take vengeance upon him. "It shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me." But in his extremity, God was the sustainer of Cain. "The Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him."

The Bible tells men to place their hopes *solely* on the LIVING GOD, who is *able* to give, and who will give, to them that rely upon Him, all, and more, than their souls can desire; but men from some perversity of mental perception, almost invariably place their hopes, and rely upon something else—turn from the Living God to worship idols. The forms of idolatry are innumerable; there are visible and invisible idols. Some men take for their gods, and rely upon, images of wood and stone, material wealth, human intellect, their own intellect or cleverness. Christ declared, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." This is a melancholy truth; nevertheless it is a truth, and Christ, the Eternal Word, could utter no less. So prone are men to rely upon false gods, that even the most enlightened, those taught by God, those who possess the belief in the future, and in the Living God, almost as part of their being, do at times turn from the True God to place their hopes in their fellow man, in the patronage of the rich or influential, or in worldly wisdom. But these things cannot fulfil our expectations. The wooden god cannot grant our petitions. We are sensible of this; and wonder at and pity the simplicity and infatuation of its worshippers. We can see the folly of other men's idolatry, but are blind to our own. How many of us in our hearts believe that, if we could only acquire so much wealth, or so much honor amongst our fellow men, it would be well with us. We disregard the

undoubted fact that such things satiate, and at last must be left, and that our souls will be required of us. We forget that men possessing the things we so much covet, have found life insupportable, and committed suicide in the vain hope of bringing their existence to an end. Sooner or later we must see *our own idolatry* in its true light, and look upon our own idols and the worship we have paid them with loathing and disgust. And let us well remember, hereafter all our acts shall be present; the secret acts and thoughts shall be revealed to all creation; a man and his acts and thoughts shall be seen together; "what has been done cannot be undone;" the blood will cry from the earth; the cunning act, intended to be secret, will be seen as part of ourselves; we may look upon it with loathing and disgust; we may regret it for ever; but eternal remorse will not blot out the hateful thing.

The Holy Scriptures counsel us to flee all kinds of idolatry, because they can only lead to disappointment and suffering; and to rely solely upon the Living God, who can and will grant to His servants the fulfilment of their desires to the very utmost. Nay, He will do more, do what to human reason seems utterly impossible, and what the human heart could never have conceived, much less have asked for. We have said the man and his acts will be seen together. A man will awake to his folly only to become loathsome to himself and others. Human reason can see no hope for him; for "what is done cannot be undone." But the Scriptures declare there is hope. If a man will turn from his idolatry, and rely *solely* upon the LIVING GOD, He will undo what has been done; He will perform a stupendous miracle for that man; He will blot out the loathsome acts, and make them as though they had never been committed; He will make that man as acceptable to himself and others as though he had never deviated in thought or deed from wisdom, purity, and goodness.

CHAPTER I.

MAN'S DESTINY REVEALED.

We pass over the epistles to the seven Churches, as they contained information intended specially for them, and turn to the general account or epistle directed to all the Churches, beginning at the fourth chapter.

John says he saw a door opened in heaven, and a voice said Come up hither, and I will show you things that must be hereafter. And then he narrates what he saw; including we must bear in mind, "things which are," as well as "things which shall be hereafter." Under a symbol he sees the throne of the LIVING GOD; surrounded by four and twenty elders sitting, clothed with white raiment (righteousness) and wearing crowns of gold (crowned with glory). In the midst of and round about the throne were four beasts full of eyes, before, behind, and within, which indicate their transcendent and exquisite powers of perception. These beasts see things clearly and as they really are; and the result of their great enlightenment is, that they day and night cease not to declare the Holiness of the Eternal God. The elders also worship and adore Him, as the Creator and source of their glory, and of all things else.

"I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with

me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle."

"And the four beasts had each of them six wings about Him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou has created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."

In the vision, John saw in the hand of Him that sat on the throne, a book, which no man either in heaven, in earth, or under the earth could open or look upon. But man possessed the desire

to see what was contained in that book; for John wept because no man was found worthy to open it; and was comforted by one of the elders, who told him that the Lion of the tribe of Juda (the promised Messiah) had prevailed to open the book.

"And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."

God the Son, the Light of the World, receives the book from God the Father, opens the seals, and reveals the destiny of man.

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne."

"And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I

beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."

The first horseman represents man. The bow is symbolical of the means by which he subdues the earth; and the crown given to him is the symbol of his dominion over other created things. "And God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and *subdue it:* and have *dominion* over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword."

The second horseman is the symbol of murder and war, which have accompanied man throughout his career, from the time of Cain to the present hour. And by war we understand not only brutal violence, but all the acts and words springing from envy, hatred, and malice, by which man hurts his fellow and takes peace from the earth.

"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

By a forced interpretation, the rider on the black horse, has been made to signify famine. But there is no agreement whatever between the quiet rider on the black horse bearing a pair of scales, and the terrible accounts of famine in other parts of Holy Writ, where we read of women being driven to the horrible alternative of lying down to die, or eating their own children. In the seventh chapter of Kings we have a description of a famine in Samaria, and of extraordinary abundance. Although the account of the black horse does not agree with either, still the unprejudiced reader must allow that it accords more with the description of the incredible plenty than with that of the famine.

The black horse with its rider is the symbol of human labour or industry. It generally confers upon all possessing moderate means the necessaries of life. "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny." It produces and preserves the luxuries of life. "See thou hurt not the oil and the wine." It promotes commerce, or the distribution of food amongst those who have money or labour to give for it. Wherever

a community is found in the peaceful pursuit of industry, there we are almost certain to see the rider on the black horse with a pair of balances in his hand, selling a measure of choice food (wheat) or three measures of coarse food (barley) for a penny, or for such a sum as a labourer may earn. The rider on the black horse does not give, but sells, the necessaries of life at a price; and the price is that fixed by God, when He said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that set on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."

This horseman is symbolical of the dissolution of the body, called death. Mankind have held him in dread from the time when God said, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." He is met with under many circumstances: in war, in famine, in disease. He has no terror for the plants of the earth, for the fishes of the sea, and fowls of the air, or the beasts of the field: they encounter him, but see and know him not. To man alone he is terrible. Hell follows with him; for man of necessity enters into hell, unless God Himself interposes to keep him out.

These four horsemen are symbols of things which *are*. As each of the four seals is opened one of the beasts says Come and see. The opening of these seals revealed things which could not only be seen by John, but which may also be seen by every man who will pause in his pursuits to look round the world. He may

see mankind subduing and having dominion over other created things in the earth. He may see man warring with and killing his fellow-man. He may see men peaceably pursuing their labour, and thus causing the necessaries of life to be distributed at a moderate price amongst all, and producing and accumulating the luxuries of life. He may see men's earthly career brought to a close in various ways, by the sword, by hunger, by lingering or rapid sickness, and by the beasts of the field.

The remaining three seals contain the things which shall be hereafter. As they are opened, the destiny of man after he has finished his earthly career, or after "death," is revealed.

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

"And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

The opening of the fifth seal reveals the condition of the people of God, or of those who trusted in Him, after death; and we think reveals it very plainly.

White robes are given to every one of them. In the seventh chapter, the blessed and happy who are with God and the Lamb are described as wearing white robes; and in the nineteenth, fine linen, clean and white, is mentioned as a garment, and stated distinctly to signify righteousness: "for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

On their departure, those who trust in the LIVING GOD, are

at once acknowledged and received by HIM as the righteous. "Abraham trusted God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness." We read of one who departed with, or immediately after, Christ; and to him the Redeemer said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Men cannot help associating every thing with *time;* and making a distinction between this hour and the end of the world. And speaking humanly, the opening of the fifth seal revealed the truth that the departed who trusted in God are with Him now, but "rest yet for a little season" before they witness the consummation of all things, and see Christ take the kingdom; and those who have turned from the Living God, and oppressed their fellow men, enter into judgment and condemnation.

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."

"And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

The opening of the sixth seal foreshows the end of the world, or the end of the present order of things; and reveals the condition after "death" of the people who have turned from the Living God.

The light of the sun and moon cease; for there shall no longer be an eye of flesh to need them. The heaven, or firmament, departs as a scroll, when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island are moved out of their place. And the people of the world are discomforted and terrified.

If we first read the account of the institution of the present order of things in the first chapter of Genesis, and then the description that follows the opening of this seal, we shall perceive clearly that the latter foreshows the termination of the former. In Genesis we read of the institution of light, and day, and night; of the making of the firmament, "called heaven;" and of the gathering together of the waters, and the appearance of the dry land. On the opening of the sixth seal, the termination of these things is described.

With this change, the worldly distinctions between man and man are swept away; and his confidence in those earthly advantages which he now seeks so eagerly and prizes so highly, is utterly lost. They give place to the all engrossing terror of the judgment, foretold by the Eternal Word or Truth, symbolized by a sharp sword proceeding out of the mouth of the triumphant rider on the white horse, who is described later in the book.

And by the end of the world we may also understand the time of a man's departure from it, which is practically the end of the present order of things to him. He leaves all he has valued and trusted to behind him; and shrinks in terror from the contemplation of his future state.

Amidst this convulsion of nature there is no ground for fear on the part of those who have placed their trust in the Living God. Especial care is taken of them, as is shown in the sign following.

"And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that

the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."

The tribes of Israel are sealed by *thousands*, of each tribe twelve thousands.

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

"And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

We may observe here, whenever the future state of those who trusted in the Living God is shown, they are seen with Him, and are pourtrayed as "the righteous," or as clothed with righteousness. They have nothing to do with the judgment; for Christ takes upon Himself the responsibility of their acts; neither do they stand in fear of the second death. Their career may be briefly described: in the body they meet with the tribulations and sorrows which flesh is heir to; they undergo the separation from the body, called the first "death," and then they enjoy the fullest realization of their hopes.

Those men, on the contrary, who have turned from the Living God and fixed their hopes on anything else, are without a Redeemer, must themselves answer for their deeds, and find the things in which they have trusted rotten and worthless.

"And when He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour."

The opening of the seventh seal reveals "the rest of God," and the future condition, as above described, of His servants; and brings us to the last page in the book of man's destiny.

The remainder of St. John's narrative contains a fuller exposition, or revelation, of what has gone before, concluding, as the seals do, with a description of the abode of the Blessed. The seven trumpets reveal the condition of the world in general; the woman and the dragon, the condition and destiny of the men who trust in the Living God; and the seven vials, the condition and destiny of those who forsake Him.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONDITION OF THE WORLD DESCRIBED.

"And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets."

"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

The thunderings, lightnings, and earthquake signify discomfort and terror, as we shall perceive more clearly as we proceed. Hereafter the servants of God are to be separated from this discomfort. We have just read, "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." By the sun and heat is to be understood here their painful effects, or the discomfort and suffering described in a future chapter, under the figure of the sun scorching men with fire and great heat.

"And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound."

"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."

"And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."

The key to the interpretation of the first four trumpets is to be found in the third chapter of Genesis: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in *sorrow* shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life."

So far as regards man, there is a curse upon the earth, from which while he sojourns here, he cannot escape. He finds a blast upon the ground, upon the sea, upon the rivers, and upon the heavenly bodies. Whichever way he turns he encounters more or less disappointment, calamity, and sorrow. If he places his hopes upon the ground he stands in dread of blighted crops. If he goes upon the sea he is in danger of tempest and shipwreck. The waters of the rivers not only assuage his thirst, but breed pestilence.

If he places his hopes on the light of day, the sun at one time scorches him, at another is darkened by clouds. Turn which way he may, he is still under the primeval curse, and meets, more or less, with sorrow and woe in some shape.

Every one who has passed twenty, thirty, or forty years on the earth has realized the truth of this assertion. Yet we seem willing to ignore it; for we hope, against past experience, to escape the curse during our future life time. But where is the man who does avoid the blast, who does not encounter sorrow and woe? In youth we look forward to unalloyed enjoyment; but who in old age can say his bright anticipations were realized, or that the blast did not pass over him?

The philosophy taught by Christ and that taught by man are diametrically opposed. HE in His Revelation declares that labour, sorrow, and calamity are inseparably connected with man during his present state upon earth. The philosophy of the world, on the contrary, teaches us to hope that by prudence, human forethought, and the promotion of civilization, we may avoid calamity and sorrow. The history of the world, of nations, and of individuals, and even the private experience of each one of us, up to the present hour, afford one grand illustration of the truth of the divine Christian philosophy. Nor must we forget that civilization upon which so many hopes for the future are founded, if it has removed some evils, has also engendered others peculiar to itself, which we find very painful to bear.

The servants of the Living God, in common with all men, encounter the blast; but sorrow, although unavoidable, is rendered more bearable to them, by the certainty that it is only temporary, and must hereafter give place to the realization of their brightest hopes. They expect to meet with calamity or sorrow on the land, on the sea, in the rivers, and in the heavens, or wherever they

may be, and are taught to bear it with resignation, because the Eternal Word has declared it to be inevitable; but they are comforted by the assurance that their supplications are borne in an angel's hand, and are made acceptable to the Eternal God, their good Counsellor, Sustainer, and Redeemer.

"And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!"

The first four woes are associated with material things, and may be considered as springing from physical causes. The three following are of a moral or mental nature, and although in general less dreaded by man, are far more terrible.

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit."

"And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads."

"And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in

those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

"And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months."

"And they had a king over them which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon."

The star that fell from heaven is the evil principle, who is permitted to afflict mankind with mental blindness, as he did Eve, when he induced her to turn from the counsel uttered by the Eternal, and to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We shall learn more of him in the signs which are to follow.

In the introductory verses of the Gospel according to St. John, we have a clear interpretation of the darkness caused by the smoke from the bottomless pit. The Word or Truth is compared to light. Christ, the incarnate Word or Truth, is declared to be the true Light. John the Baptist bore witness to the Light—called upon men to turn to the Light—to hearken to the everlasting truth now about to be uttered by One in human form. This One declared that that which He taught he had received from God the Father; who sees from the beginning to the end, to whom all is present. Therefore what He utters must be simply, but emphatically, the Truth. He sees at once the past, the present, and the future; and when He declares that the unredeemed must

suffer everlasting pain, he simply proclaims that which He sees; for their future sufferings are already before, present to, Him.

Very many other examples might be given; indeed throughout the Holy Scriptures the term Light is used to signify the knowledge or the perception of the Truth; and darkness to signify ignorance, or the absence of this knowledge.

The evil one is permitted to open the bottomless pit, whence arises a dense smoke, which darkens the sun and the air. He obscures the Light, afflicts men with gross ignorance. Let us not suppose this darkness to be a small woe. Great is the calamity of that man, who is daily adding to the number of his acts, which hereafter he must look upon with hopeless regret for ever and ever. Nor is it a small sorrow for the man who places his hopes on God the Redeemer, to be kept from a clear view of that glorious future, which, if seen, would dwarf present ills to their real insignificance, and make the throwing off of the body, called death, a process cheerfully looked forward to.

Out of the smoke come locusts, things which mar and devastate, what, if they were absent, might be fair and peaceful. The injury they inflict is not physical but mental. They do not hurt the grass; but only those men who turn from the Living God. The scorpions attack those men, not by open violence, but secretly: the sting is felt before the creature is seen.

These scorpions are numerous; but envy, hatred, malice, and fear are the shape in which they most frequently attack men. The darkness favors and disguises their approach; for if men could only see clearly, they would sweep the reptiles away, and avoid contact with things that only sting and torment them.

For an illustration amongst "civilized" people, let us take the case of a man whose "means have become reduced," and who has sunk in the estimation of the world. Observe the miserable

wretch. How his ill disguised dread and feeling of degradation torment him. He has lost all; his eye can see no beauty, all is blank; eternity with all it shall unfold, and the everlasting God, with all His glorious attributes ready to be exerted for the good of the miserable driveller, are as nothing in his eye. He has lost the shallow esteem of those whom in his heart he never honored. To regain this is all he cares for. Without it life is worthless; and as a lesser evil he makes the vain attempt to bring his existence to a close. But alas death flees from him. He wakes in the full blaze of light, and with a howl shrinks from it. He sees the contemptible nature of that he so highly valued. He utters bitter curses upon his own consummate folly. Oh! had he but turned to the Light, he might have trodden the miserable reptile that stung him beneath his foot, and stood a man, the image of his maker, sustained and cherished by the Living God.

The description of the locusts, as they appear to men, who cannot see clearly for the smoke, is imposing, attractive, and yet terrible. They have "as it were crowns like gold, faces like the faces of men, and hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.'

Their power to hurt is less enduring than that of the creatures in the next woe: it is to hurt men for five months. The same locust does not retain its power to sting a man during the whole period of his sojourn upon earth. In youth one locust may fascinate and sting him. With experience he obtains a little light, and the creature loses its power, but only makes way for another, which in its turn may have to give place to some other. In short, the mental anxieties of a man will vary as he progresses through the present life. In youth he will be fascinated and vexed, or stung, by one, in middle age by another, and in old age by another. But unless he turn to the Light, hearken to the truth, there will [redacted] locust stinging, or about to sting him.

These locusts have a king over them—the angel of the bottomless pit, who is permitted to make war upon and persecute the servants of the Living God while on earth, but whose office is also to torment and punish his own worshippers, who bear his own mark in their forehead. This is a truth proclaimed by the voice of the Living God, verified by the experience of man up to this hour, and elucidated in the signs to follow.

The serpent is the scriptural symbol for the evil principle; and the metaphor is carried out in making locusts with scorpions' stings, the symbol of his agents or emissaries.

"One woe is past; and behold there come two woes more hereafter."

"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them."

"And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt."

The four angels let loose are the spirits that instigate and

inspire false teachers. They are prepared for an hour, a day, a month, and a year, that is for all parts of time, and will be permitted to exercise their power so long as time exists. For during the continuance of this world there will always be found men ready to turn from the truth and to believe a lie. The first example was afforded by Eve. The Eternal Word enunciated the truth that in the day she eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil she should die. The teacher of falsehood, under the form of the serpent, promulgated another doctrine: they should *be as gods*, knowing good and evil. She turned from the true prophecy, and to her sorrow, received the lie in its place.

In the last chapter of the first book of Kings we have it stated clearly that lying spirits are permitted to deceive men. The prophet Micaiah declares, "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?" "And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? and he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also." And as the Lord, to whom the "future" is present, had foretold, Ahab believed a lie, and went up to Ramoth-gilead, and fell there.

The falsehoods uttered by the lying spirits are typified by fire, smoke, and brimstone, as the Eternal Word is typified by a sword proceeding out of the mouth of the triumphant rider on the white horse. "Their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt." The words they utter have the power of deceiving men, but in the end they sting all who believe their lies.

The past and present history of the world abounds in examples

of false teaching being received as the highest wisdom. We will select one example from our own country and our time. THE ETERNAL TRUTH had declared it is not good for man to be alone, instituted marriage, and uttered the command, "Be fruitful and multiply." But another doctrine was taught, and received by men as infallible truth. They were taught to dread a rapid increase of the population, lest the people should multiply faster than the food for their maintenance; and to practice what is called moral restraint, and to abstain from marriage. The practical and necessary result of this doctrine was and is to foster and promote female prostitution, and filthiness such as we dare not mention. The effect has been, as is too well known amongst those conversant with the subject, sorrow, disease, and premature "death." Could all the suffering and "waste of human life" in England, which have been caused by this one false doctrine, be placed before us, the stoutest heart would be appalled, and at once admit that the allegory of a creature vomiting fire, smoke, and brimstone, to the hurt and "destruction" of man, is no more than a faithful type of the dreadful reality. Women perhaps have suffered most from the reception of this lie, and have shown the greatest inclination to rebel against it. Matrimony has been a constant theme with them, as it is an instinct implanted in our nature. Their desire for matrimony has afforded amusement to men; but instinct has served them better than man's boasted knowledge. Their instinctive impulse for marriage is heavenly light and godlike wisdom, when compared with the false dark doctrine so firmly believed and acted upon by men.

"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass,

and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

This is one of the most melancholy truths contained in the book. It might have been expected that men seeing these calamities falling upon themselves and others, would have fled from them, and turned unto THE LIGHT for instruction and consolation; but experience illustrates, what the ETERNAL WORD declares, that men are willing to ascribe the evils they suffer to anything rather than their own blindness, and to accept and believe a lie. Having eyes they see not; having ears they hear not; their hearts are hardened lest they should turn unto THE LIGHT, and HE should heal them.

The sounding of the six trumpets reveals a picture of the condition of man upon earth—ever suffering or in danger of suffering from physical ills—ever suffering or in danger of suffering from mental deception, from want of the knowledge of the truth. These are the things which are.

The sounding of the seventh trumpet reveals the end of all these things, and carries us onwards to things that shall be hereafter. It is preceded, in the vision, by the appearance of an angel, who converses with John, and gives him further information, referring chiefly to the present.

"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders

uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."

As it pleased God to command John to seal up or keep secret the things which the seven thunders uttered, they must remain hidden from us.

"And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."

"And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."

The open book is the revealed truth, sweet to the taste, but bitter to the belly. To acquire the knowledge of it is pleasant, but to regulate the actions of our life in accordance with this knowledge is painful to the flesh. To hear of eternal life and a better and more desirable state hereafter is pleasant. To witness

in other men the exercise of the great virtues it inculcates, excites our admiration, but to practice them ourselves is often painful; and we fear must continue so while we remain here. Even Christ himself exclaimed, "If it be possible let this cup pass from me."

"And he said unto me, Thou must prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."*

John is commanded to measure the temple of God, the altar, and them that worship therein; for there and by them God is acknowledged as Lord and King. But the court which is without the temple, that is this present world, he is not to measure, for it is given unto the Gentiles. Another king, called the prince of this world, is served and reigns there, and is permitted to usurp the authority of the True and Eternal God, and, for a time, to triumph over His servants. This is plainly shown by what follows shortly afterwards, at the end of these things. The four and twenty elders then give thanks unto God, because he is taken his great power and has reigned; put down the false usurper, who deceived

* We suppose the time mentioned here and in the following passages (42 months; times, time and half a time, or three and a half years; and 1260 days) to signify the duration of the world, or, to each individual, the duration of life, or time of his journeying through this world or wilderness, that being the beginning and end of this world to him; prefigured by the journey of the Jews in the wilderness, and during which time a generation passed away.

Eve at the beginning, and has deceived men to this day.

Although the world is deceived and pays willing allegiance to a false usurper, it is not altogether left without the knowledge of the truth. The two witnesses, the spirit and the word,* whisper in man's heart and proclaim in his ear the eternal truth, and strive against the deceiver, and yield the light that shineth in darkness.

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."

"And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed."

These witnesses declare the truth, and what they testify is inevitable and must come to pass. When they foretel pain and sorrow as the result of any act, although men may neglect or scoff at their counsel, yet their words shall be realized, and the realization of that which proceeds from their mouths shall pierce and wound their enemies.

"These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophesy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

All the sorrow, sufferings, and plagues they proclaim shall smite mankind, unless God Himself interpose to avert them: nothing less than His Almighty arm can withstand them.

Nevertheless, the false one shall triumph over these witnesses, and they shall be treated with disrespect, contumely, and insult; for in this world falsehood is permitted, for a time, to triumph over the truth.

*Conscience the witness in the heart, Romans ii. 15. Christ the incarnate Word, the faithful Witness, Rev. i. 5., iii. 14.

"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves."

"And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth."

By a perversity of human judgment, not only will the truth enunciated by these witnesses be neglected by man, but they will be regarded as opponents and enemies to his welfare. How often do we hear the teachers and followers of false systems of philosophy decry restraints upon man's will and passion as obstacles to human happiness? How often is he who foresees and warns men of coming evil, regarded as though he were the originator of the ills which he only foreshows and urges men to shun?

Of this perversity of judgment we have an example in the case of Ahab, before alluded to. The prophet Micaiah foresaw the fall of the King at Ramoth-gilead, and forewarned him of the coming evil. The king, in return, wreaks his vengeance upon the truthful prophet, the weakness of which act even unaided human reason can perceive. If one forewarns us of a marsh in our path that will engulph and overwhelm us, cool reason can dictate but one line of conduct, that is to endeavour to avoid it; but to punish, as though he had made the marsh, the man whose keener perception disclosed it to us, is the extreme of injustice and unreasonable folly.

But hereafter, at the end of this world, or the close of a man's career through it, the testimony of these witnesses shall be made manifest, and the truths they have uttered shall shine forth everlasting realities, immutable amidst many changes. The material world shall change its form; man shall see things in a very different and clearer light; and in the midst the testimony of these two witnesses shall stand out the absolute truth.

"And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

"And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven."

With this manifestation of the truth and clearer perception by man, the hopes he has founded on falsehood and deception will be shaken and in part overthrown. A few will be terror-stricken, and turn unto the Living God for succour. For we are taught that some in their last hour will repent, and find the way of redemption.

"The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly."

The mental blindness and deceptions caused by the smoke from the bottomless pit, and the anxiety and sufferings on earth which spring from them, constitute the first woe. The awaking, or opening of the eyes, to a perception of these deceptions, and the shaking and overthrow of the hopes founded upon them, form the second woe. The third woe is the judgment, revealed in the signs and symbols to follow.

With the judgment, the conflict between truth and error and good and evil, ceases; and the Eternal Truth at once assumes its rightful and absolute sovereignty.

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

"And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward untc Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."

"And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."

As the mighty angel with the open book had foretold, the mystery of God is finished. To His servants the truth is now *clearly* revealed. But other men are visited with discomfort, terror, and sufferings.

CHAPTER III.

THE CONDITION AND DESTINY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars."

Two women are described, as symbols, in the Revelation of St. John; the woman crowned with twelve stars and fed by God in the wilderness; and the great whore who glorifieth and exalteth herself.

We find no difficulty in interpreting the meaning of these symbols; for they are used in the Old Testament in a manner not easily misunderstood.

The Scriptures in speaking of God and mankind use, for figures, the most endearing of human ties. God's faithful people are described under the figure of a good and chaste wife, whom her husband loveth much and delighteth to honour; while those who are faithless to the true God are described as a shameless prostitute, who has departed from her husband and become the most abominable of whores.

In the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel, God's chosen people, the Jews, are depicted as a forsaken infant whom God found and cherished; and at the proper age took to wife, clothed with rich garments, and endowed with all manner of riches. But the Jews proved faithless to the true God; and their conduct is described under the figure of this wife having become a harlot and abandoned whore. Again, in the third chapter of Jeremiah, we read, "They say if a man put away his wife, and she go from him and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord:" and, in the fourteenth verse, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you." Many other examples will occur to the minds of our readers; who will remember also that in the New Testament God the Redeemer is described as "the bridegroom," and His people as "the wife."

We return to the narrative regarding the woman clothed with the sun.

"And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

"And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth."

"And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."

The new born helpless child about to be devoured by the dragon, represents "the seed of the woman" "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." It represents men or a man who lays hold of the promise of redemption, and is saved by the miraculous interposition of the hand of God the Redeemer.

Let us clearly understand that redemption means something more than the withholding of the punishment of a crime. Redemption is the miracle of miracles. We have said man, who has partaken of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of necessity descends into hell unless he is saved from it by the miraculous interposition of God. If a man has but by one act or thought degraded himself or dishonoured God, the recollection of his guilt must form an everlasting source of remorse and sorrow; nor can human reason discover or even imagine any way of escape from it. The man's only hope is in the promise of God, who has declared that He will interpose by a miracle in behalf of those who rely upon Him; that He will make that which is as though it were not; that He will make the impure as though he had never been impure, the unjust as though he had never committed injustice, and the foolish as though he had never been guilty of folly.

The man who places his whole trust in the True God, who brought him an unconscious infant into the world, and who sustains the whole fabric of creation, shall, as it is repeatedly declared, want no manner of good. God will endow him with honour, glory, and power; and "he shall rule all nations with a rod of iron." We should not dare to ascribe so high a destiny to man, but that we have the positive authority of Jesus Christ. By His command, John writes thus to the Church of Thyatira, "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron." His rod,

or sceptre, shall not be broken. His power and glory shall be unchallenged and universally acknowledged. Malice shall not misrepresent, and envy shall not disparage; neither shall the recollection of his own unworthiness, nor sorrow for his sins, arise in self-accusation to mar his glory. God the Redeemer will assume the responsibility of the man's acts, and drive out the accuser.

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down. which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

We return to the account of the woman whose child was caught up unto God.

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And

to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

"And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth."

The earth helped the woman. For the sake of her seed, "a curse" is placed upon the earth. "Cursed is the ground for your sake." "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground."

The necessity under which man is placed of labouring for his subsistence has a powerful influence in restraining his evil passions and desires. The great majority of men are doomed to labour, and thus compelled to weary their bodies and minds in harmless occupations. For one man to take by violence, or steal, others must accumulate by inoffensive labour. Even the lordly conqueror, when he has devastated a land, is compelled to pause while other men by labour of body and mind cultivate the ground and gather the fruits. The doom of man to labour for his subsistence saves him from an incalculable amount of sinful acts and thoughts; and thus the redeemed are spared much bitter repentance here, and the unredeemed a large addition of suffering. The earth helps the woman, by interfering with the work of the seducer, accuser, and tormentor of man. It binds him to labour, and prevents his whole attention being engaged by the evil one.

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The dragon makes war with the seed of the woman which keep the commandments of God, in this world (the wilderness), by blaspheming the Holy One, and causing the pride, passion, and perverse judgment of man to triumph over the eternal truth; as was the case in the great example, when the Jews reviled and put to a felon's death the incarnate Word, or Truth, the Son of God.

Blasphemy and the perverse judgment of man are delineated in the account which follows, under the figure of two beasts. The first is a counterpart of the dragon, having seven heads and ten horns; and his name is openly shown.

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority."

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."

At the beginning of the Bible we have the promise that the head of the blaspheming dragon, or serpent, shall be bruised. In Isaiah, chapter xxvii., the promise is repeated: "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." And in this Revelation of St. John we see God interpose to save His people from the mouth of the dragon; and Michael cast out of heaven the accusing beast, who, if he were permitted, would blast their happiness through all eternity.

Nevertheless, to the eye of all but those taught of God, the beast is unscathed, his deadly wound is healed; and his power and authority are undiminished; and all the world wonders after him. For we read,

"And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

All shall worship the beast but those whose names are written in the book of life; and these he shall tempt by a display of his power, and persecute when they reject him. As he did the incarnate God, when he showed him "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," and said, "all these things I will give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." But He had power to avoid the evil and to choose the good, and knew that the proffered gift, like fruit rotten at the heart, though fair to the eye, was repulsive and filthy when grasped in the hand. It is not so with the unenlightened. They value above every thing else the riches, power, and glory of this world, and esteem them as essential to man's well being; in their hearts exclaiming what is equal to these gifts and their giver, who shall be able to stand against them.

But mark what the Spirit, who seeth the future as well as the present, saith.

"If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

There shall be a complete and perfect retribution. He that uses these worldly gifts uses them at his own peril, and often uses them against himself. And hence the enlightened have patience, because they know what the future shall bring forth.

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon."

"And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."

"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."

"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

The second beast has a certain similitude to the incarnate Truth, but is boastful and vainglorious. "He had two horns like

a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." He deceiveth them that dwell upon the earth by making them believe the power, wisdom, and gifts of the evil one to be greater and better than the power, gifts, and counsel of the ETERNAL GOD.

We have an example very early in the Holy Scriptures. The Eternal Truth forewarned man not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The dragon, or serpent, declared that it would be to the advantage of men to eat of the fruit, that it would exalt them—make them as gods, knowing good and evil. The woman weighed the advice of the two counsellors in her mind, and adopted that of the evil one, not from any wilful desire to rebel against the commands of the Eternal, but because she, being deceived, thought it the best for her and her husband. We read, "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband." Her imperfect judgment deceived her, and caused her to take the evil one for her god and counsellor.

And in the same manner, the perverse judgment of man, the second beast, has deceived the world to this hour, by making men believe that by cunning, falsehood, cruelty, and oppression they promote their own good. Innumerable examples might be given. The man set apart to preach the gospel thinks it necessary to conciliate rich patrons "on account of his family;" the tradesman thinks it necessary to lie that he "may succeed in his business;" the thief thinks robbery the easiest way of getting what he desires, and thus promoting his comfort. These are the arguments we actually hear in the world. Men tell us it is advantageous and even necessary for them to depart from the teaching of the Eternal, and to a certain extent to follow the counsel of the evil one. In short, having weighed the question in their minds, their perverse

judgment declares the evil one to be the better counsellor, and he becomes their god. But the temptations before which we fall, and the questions we weigh in our minds, are mean and paltry when compared with that to which Eve yielded. In our case it is a little more money or a little more consideration amongst our fellow-men. In her case it was—eat of the fruit, and ye shall be raised to a level with the gods—perhaps, at once the most awful and grandest temptation to which man was ever subjected, or before which he ever fell.

But perverse human judgment makes men follow the counsel of the evil one, not only by promising the gratification of their desires, but also by exciting that strong passion, fear. The second beast threatens all who will not serve and receive the mark of the evil one, with proscription, loss, suffering, and even death. In whatever part of the earth a man may be, he will be called upon by the people to worship the peculiar image of the evil one set up there. At Ephesus the stranger was called upon to acknowledge the glory of Diana. In many parts of the world he is required to pay respect to the material image, or symbol, of the evil principle; and in England he is called upon to adore wealth, rank, customs opposed to the teaching of the Scriptures, and the uncharitable dogmas of sects and parties. Should he refuse, in some parts the people will rise up against him and perhaps put him to death; and in England he will be threatened with the much dreaded calamities of failure in his worldly pursuits and loss of social position.

And let it be understood these are no idle threats. The Scriptures clearly teach that those who follow the counsel of the Eternal, and refuse to acknowledge the evil one, must expect to suffer; for the serpent is permitted to persecute them in their path through this world, or wilderness: it is declared he shall bruise

their heel. But this is quite consistent with another declaration of holy writ:—he who shall voluntarily suffer loss for the truth's sake, shall receive a hundred fold in this present state. Many things may conduce to man's earthly good—wealth, health, domestic relations, the state of his mind, etc. And it is quite common in life for a loss in one respect to be more than counterbalanced by gains in other respects. The Eternal does aid his servants in mysterious ways. Sometimes without a man's raising his finger his enemies are foiled, or his good is promoted; and sometimes the sorrow of the righteous is concluded at once by his being "taken away from the evil to come." The serpent is permitted to sting the servant of God in his journey through this wilderness; but the righteous is promised the victory; he shall inflict a more serious wound than he receives; he shall smite his adversary on the head.

The description of the second beast concludes thus:—"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."

What we have written will have prepared the reader for our interpretation of the number. It is SIX, the epoch of man, thrice repeated. The people of God look forward to the morrow, the SEVENTH day or epoch, when they shall rest from toil and trouble, and enter into the glorious abode of the Eternal. The servants of the evil one do not enter into the rest of God; for them there is an eighth day or epoch, of which we shall read presently.

John next sees a Lamb, the symbol of the Eternal Word, or Truth; and hears a doctrine proclaimed very different to that inculcated and enforced by the evil one and the perverse judgment of man.

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."

"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

The followers of the Lamb sing as it were a new song. They alone, being enlightened by God, can comprehend the Eternal Truth, and appreciate the promises it unfolds. It is hidden from other men, who being mentally blinded by ignorance, are deceived, and elect the evil one for their lord and master, and follow the dictates of the blaspheming beast and their own perverse judgment.

The redeemed are made pure and undefiled by the miraculous interposition of the Eternal; according to the promise, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." The Bridegroom will receive them as chaste wives. They are without fault before the throne of God; for Michael has driven the accuser out of heaven, and the Lord will not enter into judgment with them.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth,

and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

"And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

The first angel, having the everlasting gospel, or truth, to preach to them who dwell on the earth, calls upon men to worship the Eternal God, the creator of all things. The second angel declares that Babylon, or the world, is fallen, because she, like a whore, has forsaken her lord, and made all under her influence participate in her crimes. The third angel pronounces the punishment for this infidelity. It is more fully described on the pouring out of "the vials of the wrath of God" and in the "judgment of the great whore."

The servants of God, knowing these things, look foward to, and patiently await, their departure to a better state.

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

It seems needless to make any comment on this declaration of the Spirit; for it is simply a scriptural truism. The Scriptures declare that the people of God on their departure leave trouble and evil behind them, but take any thing really desirable, or any good they possess, with them; and to this good God will add most abundantly.

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."

"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

The point to be observed and particularly noted in this description is that there are two different reapers. The Redeemer first reaps and takes his own—"the servants of God" who "have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Nothing more is said of them here: their future state has already been described. Another angel then reaps and gathers those who have departed from the True God, and followed the counsel of the evil one, or gone "a whoring after their own inventions;" and casts them into the winepress of the wrath of God. Their destiny and God's wrath are described in the signs which follow.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONDITION AND DESTINY OF MEN WHO FORSAKE GOD.

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest."

To those who have got the victory over the beast the truth is revealed. They are not deceived by him, but see things as they really are. To them the judgments of God are manifest.

The seven trumpets revealed the condition of the world generally, including the servants of God. On the pouring out of the seven vials the condition of the world, or people who serve the beast, is revealed,—not as it appears to them, for they are deceived, but as it appears to the eye or mind capable of taking an enlarged and comprehensive view.

"And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."

"And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

"And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image."

The servants of the beast are mentally diseased and loathsome, although they know it not.

"And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea."

"And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments."

The force of this figure, the conversion of water into blood, is not perceived by Christians of the present day; for they are disobedient to the commandment of God, and their disobedience has afflicted them with mental blindness. The commandment to abstain from blood was given to Noah, and is clearly and explicitly repeated in the New Testament. An unbiassed examination of the Scriptures will convince any candid mind that this command is as definite and imperative as the command to respect the Sabbath day. When a Christian abstains from labour on the seventh day, by this act he preaches to his family and those around him, God the Creator of the universe. When he abstains from touching blood, but pours it upon the earth, he preaches or proclaims the indestructibility or eternity of life. He takes the carcase for his own use, but not the blood or "life." The blood or "life" he touches not, but pours upon the earth, or returns whence it came.

Blood and water are two great scriptural types or symbols. The former is the polluter, and the latter the purifier or cleanser; and very apt and expressive symbols they are. The man whose body is smeared with blood is stained and dirty. Water, on the contrary, purifies his skin, and is, in fact, the universal cleanser.

Blood and scum are used alternately by the prophet Ezekiel, in the twenty-fourth chapter, as the signs or symbols of pollution, filthiness, and sin. "Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose

scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece, let no lot fall upon it. For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust; that it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered." "Thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee."

The conversion of the sea and rivers and fountains of water into blood affords a fearful image of the utter corruption and pollution of the earth; for the flowing waters, which should cleanse and purify, are represented as being in the highest sense corrupt and polluted also. The picture is made more striking by what followed. Not only are men polluted and corrupt, and without the means of cleansing themselves, but they drink pollution.*

"And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men

* We read (c. 7, v. 14,) that the redeemed "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." This may seem inconsistent with blood being the symbol of pollution; but the apparent disagreement disappears on a little consideration. From the body of Christ flowed blood and water: the one the sign of pollution, not to the body from which it flowed, but to the hand that shed and touched it; and the other the sign of purification. The sin of man made a sacrifice necessary, and the hand of man shed the blood of Christ; and hence the bleeding body of Christ on the cross is at once a result, a proof, and a sign of the pollution of the world. But with the blood is mingled water, the sign of purification or cleansing from pollution. Christ came to convince the world of sin, as well as to point out the way of redemption. The man who goes to the cross is convinced of his pollution, but with this conviction arises the assurance of purification and redemption; for from the one body flow together the two symbols, the blood and the water.

were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory."

In the Scriptures man on earth is represented as a traveller on a journey; and the calamity and sorrow he encounters in his career are expressed by the apt figures of scorching heat, and storms of lightning and hail; as, in the eighty-third Psalm,— "Persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm." And the scorching by the sun, on the pouring out of the fourth vial, represents the sufferings endured by the servants of the beast in their journey through this world. And these sufferings cannot be assuaged; because, instead of turning to Him who alone is able to afford them consolation and to ease their pain, they deny His power and blaspheme His name. They are at once loathsome, self-polluted, and tormented; and to these calamities is superadded mental darkness, as described on the pouring out of the fifth vial; so that they cannot see the way of escape from their sufferings.

"And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."

The kings of the east and the kings of the earth are both mentioned in this part of the prophecy. The kings of the earth are the servants of the beast who apparently rule and triumph in the present epoch, the sixth day. The kings of the east are those

who shall appear victorious and triumphant in the coming epoch, the seventh day. They are called kings of the east, because men look to the east for the rising sun and the coming day. They shall certainly come; for all obstacles are removed, and the way is prepared for them.

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.) And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

The power of the dragon, the blaspheming beast, and the false prophet, or deceiving beast, was described in the previous chapter, as also was the manner in which they deceive the world, and cause it to turn from the Eternal God to follow them. The result is that when the kings of the east shall appear in glory in the coming day, and the Eternal Word shall triumph over all and every thing opposed to it, the men whose names are not written in the book of life will be seen, with those who have deceived them, arrayed in opposition to the Truth and the Eternal God. What will then take place is described hereafter.

With this prophecy is given a caution to those who will listen to the truth to be watchful.

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done."

"And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."

The pouring out of the seventh vial brings us to the end of the world or the close of a man's earthly career. The voices and convulsions typify that at the end of his journey he is terror stricken and confounded, and sees all his hopes overthrown. But yet he is not enlightened; he does not escape from the dark kingdom of the beast. From the concluding verse it seems the servants of the beast will never know the truth; will never repent and turn unto Him who could succour and restore them. Their fate seems to be to suffer and blaspheme, and to blaspheme and suffer for ever.

The destiny of the men who have forsaken God to serve the beast or dragon, and become his instruments in persecuting the seed of the woman which have the testimony of Jesus Christ, is further revealed to St. John.

"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon

many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

The people of God, we have said, who rely upon His promises, are described under the figure of a woman whom He nourishes in the wilderness (the world), where they are persecuted by the evil one. But they are succoured by God, and ultimately triumph over their enemy. Those men, on the contrary, who have forsaken their God and Creator to rely upon the promises of the deceiver, and the cunning devices of their own hearts, are described as a faithless wife who has left her husband, and become a harlot. The people who are faithful to their God are, in language which cannot be misunderstood, called the wife of the Lamb. Those who are faithless to their God, who have forsaken their Lord and given themselves unto others, and whom He, for that reason, repudiates, are not "the wife," but "the whore." And this interpretation is strictly scriptural; for in the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel God's chosen people are plainly described as His wife; but when they had departed from Him they are called "the harlot" and "the whore" whom he would judge and punish; and in the Psalms we read "they went a whoring after their own inventions;" and again, "For, lo, they that are far from Thee shall perish: Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from Thee."

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

The blaspheming beast and his followers, here described under the figure of a woman sitting upon the beast, we have seen are permitted in this world to persecute, kill, and apparently triumph over the servants of the Eternal God.

"And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns."

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

"And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."

"And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

"And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

The beast that was and is not. He was all powerful over man; for by his deceptions he has induced men, as he did Eve, to commit acts which entail everlasting sorrow and woe. No human aid can break the chain, nor can the human mind imagine a remedy; for "what has been done cannot be undone." But God has interposed by a surpassing miracle to avert the evil, and blot out and make the acts men have done as though they had never been; and hence those who rely upon His miraculous aid stand pure, holy, and without fault before His throne. God will not accuse them, nor let any evil come into recollection against them; and the dragon who would have called their sins to remembrance has been defeated and driven out of heaven, and his place is no more found there. He was, and is not. But yet he is; for they who have not turned to God for succour still wonder after the beast, are under his dominion, and in his power.

The seven mountains on which the woman sitteth are symbolical of the manner in which the whore exalteth herself in the earth. "She saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."

By a forced interpretation a narrow and exclusive application has been made of this part of the Revelation of St. John. But

we believe its application is very wide and general indeed. If a man, however pure the creed he professes, hopes to promote his interest by conciliating a patron, or by some cunning manœuvre, he is false to the True God, has removed his trust from Him, and goes "a whoring after the imaginations of his own heart;" and is not the "wife" of the Lamb, but is the "whore" of the Scriptures.

We derive the explanation of the seven kings from the book of Genesis. The kings we believe refer to "the days" or periods there described. Five have fallen or passed away, and one, the sixth, is, and the seventh has not yet come. When he cometh he must continue a short space. We are writing of those who have forsaken the True God, whom He will therefore repudiate, and who are described as "the whore." The seventh day is not to be a time of rest for them; for God hath said "they shall not enter into my rest." It will last long enough for the people of God to witness the perfect triumph of the Truth. God will then judge, and cast off for ever, the followers of the beast, who will enter the eighth day or state of perdition. That state is personified by the spirit of evil, and will reveal only ignorance, blasphemy, and suffering.

The ten horns represent the worldly powers in which the followers of the blaspheming beast glory, and by which they rule in the earth, and persecute the servants of the True God. They "have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." The power they exercise at present is temporary, and they give it to the beast, and make war with the Eternal Truth. But He shall overcome them; and they shall do His will, by realizing His prophecy, that those who trust in these earthly powers shall find that they lead to suffering and woe: they shall torment the men whose hopes have been fixed upon them. They "shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her with fire."

An angel proclaims the state of the world, which has departed from God.

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."

The voice from heaven which had before declared "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," now fortels the end of the riches, honour, and other earthly powers which men seek so eagerly and in their hearts esteem so highly. The picture is the very reverse of that drawn by the imagination of man. He regards these earthly advantages as powers, or kings, greatly to be honoured, and looks upon them as the fountain of every joy and the source of all good; but the voice from heaven, on the contrary, declares that they lead to sorrow, mourning, and woe. The picture is striking: instead of men rushing forward as they do now to grasp at the riches and honors of this world, the merchants, whose business it is to go wherever they may be found, are described as fearing to approach, standing *afar off*, and lamenting over the departed glory of these things, and the desolation that has succeeded it.

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according

to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this

great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her."

On the opening of the fifth seal the souls of them that were slain for the word of God were represented as crying "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth;" and they were told to rest for a little season. Here the promise is fulfilled, and their wrongs are avenged. Those earthly powers which were used to persecute them, and which, through human frailty, they regarded as something great, and before which in their weaker moments they may have quailed, now come to naught, and leave only bitterness and sorrow for those who relied upon and used them.

The proclamation of the angel who follows gives emphasis to what has gone before.

"And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."

"And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

On the head of the whore, that is on the people who have departed from the True God, rest the blood, pollution, and crimes of the earth.

The realization of the promise and vindication of the faithful call forth rejoicings and praises in heaven, in which the myriads of the redeemed unite; unfolds the last page in man's destiny; and reveals the final, complete, and absolute victory of the Eternal Word or Truth, represented under the figure of the triumphant rider on the white horse.

"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia."

"And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."

"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

"And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh, a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

The sharp sword proceeding out of his mouth is symbolical of his mode of warfare, and the nature of his victory. It consists in the complete fulfilment and realization of those evils and sorrows which he foresaw, foretold, and invited men to shun. They shall certainly come, and must rest upon the heads of those men who despised and rejected his counsel. As Isaiah prophecied, "With the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."

The completeness of the victory is represented under the figures of a great slaughter, and the casting into a lake of fire of the blaspheming beast and the false prophet, or second beast,

(the cunning devices of man) who in the world appear to be invincible and to possess absolute sway.

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great."

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

In respect to the end of this world there are, humanly speaking, two periods, or times, as there are said to be two resurrections. The first period refers to a man's departure, or death, which, practically, is the end of this world to him. The second

refers to the close of the present order of the universe, the consummation of all things and the final judgment. The thousand years signify the intervening time, during which the spirit of evil is bound and cannot deceive the people, the departed. On the opening of the fifth seal we learnt that the redeemed, who have laid hold of the promise of God, are received by Him as "the righteous." They are with Christ. The evil principle can no more deceive or trouble them: they are removed beyond his influence for ever. But the rest of the dead, we are told, live not again until the thousand years are finished, when they shall be gathered together to appear, with the evil principle who has deceived them, at the final judgment. He will at that time be loosed for a little season, and deceive his followers even then; causing them, in their hearts, to question and deny the accusation of the Eternal Truth, saying to Him, "when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee."

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

The people of God, we have seen, on their departure from this world are received by Him in the holy city, in the abode of the

blessed, where sorrow cannot enter. "On such the second death hath no power;" neither are they in danger of the judgment. There is none to accuse them; and by the miraculous interposition of the Almighty, according to His promise, they are made pure, holy, and undefiled. Their part is to sit round the throne of the Judge, and witness and comprehend His righteous judgment of the wicked. Christ declared to His disciples, Hereafter ye shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The thief, whose mighty faith in that awful hour, when even Apostles were terrified, uttered the prayer, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom, obtained the memorable and all sufficient promise, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them."

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And

the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

It is particularly to be noticed that two classes of persons and two kinds of books are referred to. The first class comprises the people of God, or the living, who appear at the first resurrection, and whose names are written in the book of life. The second consists of "the dead," or "the rest of the dead," who are gathered together before the throne of God at the second resurrection, whose names are not written in the book of life, but who are judged out of the things contained in the other books. They have not been separated from their evil deeds by the miraculous interposition of the Almighty; their works stand recorded against them; they are rejected by God; and of necessity enter into the abode of the evil one.

CHAPTER V.

THE NEW ORDER OF THINGS.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

This description refers to the people of God only, as is clearly shown by what follows.

"And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new."

"And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

"And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

The fearful are named before the unbelieving; and doubtless fear is the prolific mother of evil. The fear of coming to want, the fear of being slighted or persecuted by the world, drive more to wilful crime, than the actual sufferings from want or persecution do. If a man doubts the support of God in minor things, how can he possess a firm belief that God will interpose, by a stupendous and incomprehensible miracle, for his redemption?

Under the figure of a city built of and containing all that is beautiful, precious, desirable, pure, and good, and from which is excluded all evil with all that man's soul can desire to shun, is shown the future abode and condition of the people of God.

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on

the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

"And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel."

"And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."

"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

"And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh

abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

"And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

The glory and honour of the nations shall be taken there. Anything on this earth which is really good and no deception, anything which a clear mental vision, long experience and unerring judgment would convince a man is good and desirable for him will be there; but anything impure, hurtful, or deceptive cannot exist in that blessed abode; for the means of enlightenment, purifying, and healing are unbounded and perpetual. They who enter there shall possess without limit all that is good and desirable, and, what is more, shall know that they possess it; and hence there will be no room for further desire.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONCLUSION.

"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

"And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."

"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

The point in this conclusion to be particularly noted is the warning that the time is at hand, that the good and evil described in this book must shortly come, that the things foreshown must shortly be done; which is impressed by the thrice enunciated declaration, "I come quickly."

This and similar declarations in the Holy Scriptures made the early Christians, and, indeed, have made Christians of every age, look for the almost immediate advent of Christ and consummation of all things. And they were right in their expectation, and doubtless it is realized. But they, it seems, also imagined they were to stand apart, after the manner of spectators, and witness some

grand convulsion of nature, and the end of other created things. In this they were wrong. For with the end of created things must have come their own end; and whether they departed amidst a mighty convulsion of the elements or on what appeared to other men a serene day, could make no difference to, and would hardly have been perceived by them. Whether a man falls from a solitary shot or in the midst of a terrible bombardment, whether he draws his last breath on his bed or amidst a mighty conflagration, is of no moment to him, even if he can perceive the difference. The end of this world has come to him; the material universe fades away; the present order of things, so far as he is concerned, is broken up and convulsed; he steps from time to eternity, and enters the abode of the blessed, or stands before the judgment seat of the Eternal to realize those evils which were foretold, and which he was invited to shun. Could the departed who have speculated, as we do, on the delay in the second advent of the Eternal Word, give us the result of their greater experience, they would declare most emphatically, He made no long tarrying, but came very quickly.

The objection may be raised that the long period of eighteen hundred years has elapsed since the prophecy, I come quickly, was first uttered. But we reply, time and distance are not realities, but only manifestations of the weakness of man's faculties. As a man recedes from a building or any other object, it grows less, and at last disappears altogether; but the diminution in size and the obliteration of the object are not realities, but only results of the limited power of the eye: the thing itself remains unaltered. So it is with time and distance: they have no real existence; but are simply the results of our present imperfect powers. When we enter upon eternity, time and distance, with many other deceptions, will vanish, and the past and future be at once opened to our

more extended view. Nevertheless, in speaking to man upon earth, time and distance must be recognised. Hence, if a man should ask where is the martyr of early times, or where is the servant of God who has just departed, we may reply, in the abode of the blessed, with the Eternal God. But if he should ask where is his persecutor, we must give a qualified answer; we must not prejudge; but reply, you will know at the end of the thousand years, or in that day when you shall enter upon eternity and stand before the throne of the Eternal. Doubtless, to many the time will seem so remote that their minds can hardly be brought to contemplate it; nevertheless it will surely come; and then they will realize the truth of the prophecy, and be ready to exclaim, He made no long tarrying, but came quickly.

In this Revelation of St. John the reader may learn his destiny. If he is the servant of the beast he is deceived; and is destined to disappointment, discomfort, and sorrow. And if he is a servant of the True God he must still expect in his passage through this life to encounter, in common with other men, evil in many forms; but so far as he trusts in the Almighty so far exactly must his troubles be alleviated; for God is bound by a promise which, from His nature, He cannot break, to succour and sustain those who rely upon Him; and the man who entertains a firm hope that efficient aid is nigh can never be quite overcome by present evil. And the servant of God may rest assured if he encounters sorrow, that the servants of the beast encounter greater sorrow. If there have been martyrs for the Truth, there have also been martyrs to the false doctrines of the beast. For one man who has laid down his life in honour of the Living God, a thousand men have sacrificed theirs in the anxious and painful pursuit of riches, fame, and earthly power, which they have been

taught to reverence as gods. And their martyrdom is far the more cruel. It is at once a sacrifice of themselves and their hopes, and reveals only black despair; but the martyrdom of the servant of the Living God, is a sacrifice of himself, and the realization of his hopes, and a door through which he enters into paradise.

To the waiting Christian the aid of his God and Sustainer may seem long in coming; because he looks upon the future through a mist, and the time is magnified by his fears; and, on this account, he is not qualified to judge. In a human court of justice he would not be a competent witness; for he sees vaguely, and describes only the picture drawn by his imagination. A witness must speak only of that which he has seen or experienced and knows positively. Before long the waiting christian will possess such knowledge. He will then understand that God was ever nigh, and be ready to bear testimony to the truth of the prophecy of his Redeemer—"Surely I come quickly."

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

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